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INK OCHi

FIRST OF ITS KIND FROM KERALA

60

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- BIHU FESTIVAL
- NIGHTS OF PLAGUE
- ART SHOWS IN KOCHI
- ART OF THE WEEK

A POETRY IN WATER SPLASH

BY ARTIST:
SUNIL LINUS DE

CULTURAL eMAGAZINE
INK OCHi
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Editor's Note

WATERCOLOUR PAINTING

Watercolor painting can be considered one of the most primitive types of painting; they are fun, they are cost-effective and give a lot of possibilities for creative self-expression. Watercolors are water-based and non-toxic, hence making it an ideal tool to teach painting to children. So, if you're just a beginner or want to get your creative juices flowing, watercolor paintings are a great start! Watercolor being a versatile and flexible medium can yield a variety of results. Despite being a tricky medium to master, there are various watercolor techniques you can adopt as your own to create a skill worth pursuing.

Artists set out their groundwork for big projects usually by using watercolors as their blueprint or outline. These paintings are often used to portray still life, landscapes and portraits. It is the art of drawing, which is usually done on paper using water-soluble pigments. Watercolor painting is familiarly used by the children during school activities and performed with boxed sets of color paints with a wet brush. The pigment transfers itself to the watered brush.

In this issue, Sunil Linus De takes you through his paintings.

Happy Reading...!!
Varghese T. Thomas

Bihu is the name for the National Festival of Assam which is one of the most beautiful states of India which is reckoned for tea gardens, mighty Brahmaputra River and Lush green forests. Also the state of Assam is reckoned for the Bihu festival that depicts a set of three different cultural festivals of the state.

The origin of the term ‘Bihu’ came from the Sankrit word that means ‘Vishu’. It is the cheerful festival of Assam that is celebrated by the locals irrespective of caste, creed and beliefs. In a year Assamese celebrate three different kinds of Bihu festival that is Bohaag Bihu in the middle of April month, Maagh Bihu in the middle of January month and Kaati Bihu in the middle of October month. >>

Bihu

Bihu – How Did The Name of the Festival Come Up?

The word Bihu is originally derived from the word known as “Bishu’, which means that people ask for prosperity from the Gods during important junctures of the harvesting season. Later on, the name somehow got distorted and the festival came to be known as Bihu. According to another source, it is commonly believed that the festival received its name from two different words, namely “bi” which means to ask and “hu” which means to give. Both these words combined to form the name Bihu.

Significance of Bihu Festival

Assam is a fertile land surrounded by Blue Mountains and replenished by the mighty Brahmaputra River. The occupation of the people here is agriculture and the entire society is agrarian in nature. Bihu is basically a celebration of the change of the seasons. Each of the three Bihu celebrations marks an important phase in the farming calendar of Assam.

What Bihu Stands For?

The festival of Bihu gives a unique identity to the Assamese people and makes them standout in the history of the nation. Bihu besides being a primary identity of Assam is also a harvest festival. It is celebrated thrice during important junctures of the agrarian calendar. >>

Bihu

The first Bihu which is known as the Bohag Bihu or Rongali Bihu is celebrated for a period of seven days. It celebrates the onset of spring and farmers on this occasion prepare the field for cultivation. There is a general air of feasting and festivity all around in the atmosphere of Assam.

The next Bihu is known as Kati Bihu and this is more of as subdued occasion. This Bihu is primarily celebrated to seek blessings from the Gods, so that no harm is done to the crops while they are getting ready for harvest.

The last Bihu is known as Magh Bihu. Magh Bihu marks the end of the harvest season. During Magh Bihu, the primary emphasis is on feasting and celebrating, as the granaries are full and farmers are no longer required to worry about their crops. Celebration of Magh Bihu involves a lot of food and entertainment and is celebrated with much enthusiasm in all Assamese families located in different parts of the World. >>

Bihu

Bohag Bihu or Rongali Bihu

Bohag Bihu is one of the most significant and important festivals in the Bihu calendar of Assam. It celebrates the commencement of harvesting season and is also regarded as the first day of the Assamese New Year. The significance of this festival is purely agricultural in nature. It is celebrated with great enthusiasm and joy throughout the state.

Bohag Bihu is the most important Bihu festival among the three Bihu festivals celebrated in the state. The festival is celebrated for seven days during the month of Bohag (Baishakh Month) which falls somewhere in the middle of the month of April. Bohag Bihu is also known as Rongali Bihu in many parts of the state. The name Rongali is derived from the word “Rong”, which means happiness and celebration. >>

Bihu

The first day of Bohag Bihu is reserved for cattle and farm animals. On the first day, cattle and farm animals are taken to the nearby river or pond and given a through bath with a paste of turmeric and black gram. The old ropes tied to their legs are caste away and new ropes are tied. On this day, they are allowed to roam around freely in the field. This ritual is observed to thank the animals for helping them in the farm work. Prayers are offered to the Gods asking for a productive year ahead.

The next day of Bohag Bihu is known as Manuah (human) Bihu. On this day, people dress up in new clothes and gifts are exchanged. People visit their relatives and seek blessings from their elders.
The third day is dedicated for the Gods and that day is known as Gosai (God) Bihu. On this day people worship their household Gods and seek their blessing for a fruitful year ahead.

During the occasion of Rongali Bihu, people wear traditional attires made from muga silk and sing traditional Bihu songs and perform traditional dance. There is a band of male singers known as Husori, who visit each and every household and sing traditional Bihu songs in the courtyard. They offer their blessings to the household in return of some alms and gifts. >>

Bihu

Kati Bihu (Kongali Bihu)

Kongali Bihu or Kati Bihu as it is commonly known derives its name from the month of Kartik which is traditionally known as Kati. Unlike Bohag Bihu, Kati Bihu is not a flamboyant festival and the festivities are more sombre in nature. This Bihu is celebrated during the time of relocation of the rice sapling during the month of October. The granaries of the farmers usually remain empty during this time, hence it is known as Kongali (poor) Bihu.

The main part of this Bihu celebration involves lightening of lamps or saaki (candles) in different parts of the household or paddy field. The main lamp is lit in the courtyard near the Tulsi plant. The Tulsi plant holds a special significance for Hindu people as it is considered to be very auspicious in Hindu religion. Besides being very auspicious, the plant is known to possess various medicinal properties that can cure a person of various ailments. >>

Bihu

On the occasion of Kati Bihu, the plant is thoroughly cleaned and is placed on a ‘Tulsi Bheti’. A lamp is lit in front of the plant and various Prasad and prayers are offered to Goddess Tulsi for the wellbeing of the family and for a good harvest. The Prasad is later on shared among various members of the household.

In the paddy field, farmers lit up a special kind of lamp, known as ‘Akash Bati’ or sky lamp. These lamps are placed high on a bamboo pole or bamboo tree. It is believed these lamps are lit to show our ancestors the way to heaven. Scientifically speaking, these lamps help to attract the various insects or pests in the field. They get drawn to the fire and die, which helps to keep the crops healthy. >>

Bihu

Magh Bihu (Bhogali Bihu)

Bhogali Bihu or Magh Bihu is celebrated during the month of January which marks the end of the harvest season. The occasion of Magh Bihu coincides with the celebrations of Pongal and Makar Sankranti in many states. Magh Bihu is the second largest Bihu festival of Assam after Bohag Bihu. On Magh Bihu, the granaries of the farmers are full and there is festivity all around.

On the occasion of Magh Bihu, people start their day early and clean their houses and wear new clothes. They throw away useless stuffs in the fire made from cow dung cakes signifying a new beginning. The main reason behind creating this bonfire is to make the overall atmosphere warm as the weather tends to remain pretty cold during the last winter month. On the occasion of Magh Bihu, a lot of people worship Lord Indra, who according to the Hindu mythology is “God of rains and clouds”. People worship him for good rains in the following months, so that they can enjoy a good harvest.

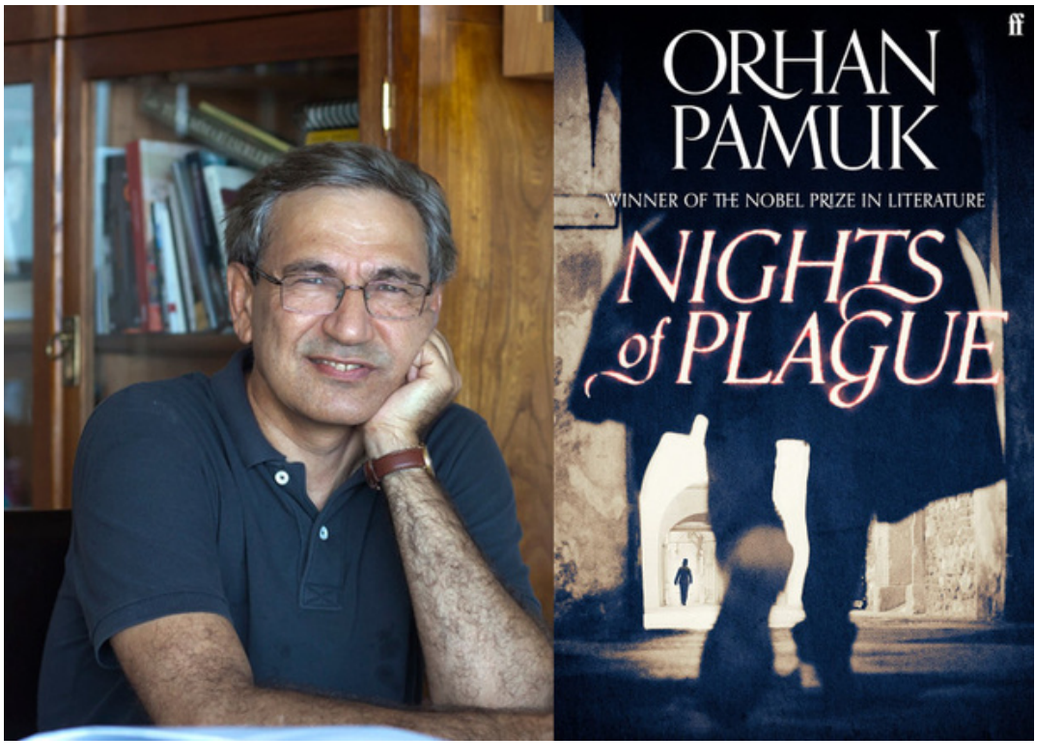
>>

Bihu

According to another tradition, young men of the villages make temporary huts from clay straw and firewood known as Mejis. Around the Mejis, a temporary makeshift accommodation is prepared known as “belagar”. The families stay in the “belaghar” and stay up all night guarding the Mejis. Community feast and cultural programmes are observed all throughout the night. In the morning, people move out of their “belaghars” and take a bath in the river and burn their Mejis. Once the Mejis are burnt down, burnt pieces of wood are collected and thrown into field, which is believed to provide better harvest. <>

Source: SCFI - Society for the Confluence of Festivals in India

BOOK DESCRIPTION



Source :
TOPPING Books, UK.

Part historical novel, part detective story, Nights of Plague transports us back one hundred years, to a fictional island in the Ottoman Empire facing the devastating consequences of a plague epidemic. What emerges is a story steeped in history and humanity that remains utterly relevant to our current world.

1901. Night draws in. With the stealth of a spy vessel, the royal ship Azizye approaches the famous vistas of Mingheria. ‘An emerald build of pink stone’. The 29th state of the ailing Ottoman Empire.

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Pamuk is the author of many celebrated books of fiction, nonfiction, and photography. In 2003 he won the IMPAC prize for My Name is Red, and in 2006 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

A POETRY IN WATER SPLASH

BY ARTIST: SUNIL LINUS DE

Interview & Text by:
Annie Smitha

A POETRY IN WATER SPLASH

Sunil Linus De - The name is intriguing but more so is the outcome - a cascade of water-colour from his finger tips can create. Water-colour is one of the riskiest mediums to work with but Sunil loves the pain and challenge involved in splaying out the unpredictable result. One cannot control the flow and speed of the watercolour oozing out of the brush stroke. The effect created may sometimes be catastrophic and it’s never easy to rework. >>

A POETRY IN WATER SPLASH

The soulful essence of Sunil's paintings are derived from the beauty and simplicity of his native village near Mundakkayam, Kerala where the fundamental aspect of modernity did not reach most houses even in the form of electricity in his childhood. Streams, hills and rivers were his playgrounds. Whatever made him happy and positive formed the picturesque images that his heart captured and later transformed into beautiful paintings. >>

A POETRY IN WATER SPLASH

Sunil's fascination with paintings were first inspired by wandering artists who drew attractive pictures on the walls of tea-stalls which invoked his interest and prompted him to turn the walls of his own house into a canvas as a child. Wall calendars from Sivakasi, Tamilnadu depicting deities gave wings to his creative ideas. His tryst with colours began with colour ball pens - blue, green, black and red before getting hold of any real colouring tool. A set of crude cake of colours gifted by his mother paired with pages torn from his math notebook later engaged him other than the plain backside of calendars. >>

A POETRY IN WATER SPLASH

Lack of guidance and crude techniques did not elevate him beyond the boy who drew well at school. However, his hope to carve out a career based on drawing found a new dimension when his teacher Mr. Alexander Kozhimala happened to come across one of his drawings. Alexander introduced Sunil to a drawing teacher named Mathews Orathel from whom he imbibed the first lessons of drawing. This in fact helped Sunil clear the entrance test to Raja Ravi Varma College of Fine Arts, Mavelikkara, Kerala. >>

A POETRY IN WATER SPLASH

A new world was opened to Sunil at the college where he studied five years specialising in Applied Arts specially advertising and came out in flying colours with a first class in NDFA. The next ten years was a period of seclusion for Sunil as an artist. He did some joint ventures in advertising for few years and later established an Advertising Company. He designed ads and related works mostly digital which did nothing to satisfy his artistic ego. A strong desire to make his own signature in the art world rekindled his spirits. He took his paint brush once again and started out with watercolour which he bettered than most since his college days. The initial attempts looked rusty with a decade of inactivity in that line but with persistent efforts he took off to a great start. >>

A POETRY IN WATER SPLASH

He has conducted more than ten solo exhibitions and has participated in more than twenty five group exhibitions worldwide including watercolour biennales. The watercolour workshop in the Kochi Muziris Biennale and his participation in Lokame Tharavadu - An art Exhibition curated by the artist Bose Krishnamachari are worth mentioning. Many awards and accolades came his way during the last thirty years. He received the Kerala Lalitha Kala Academy award for his watercolour painting titled ‘Nostalgia’. He is one among the five notable watercolourists from India chosen to be included in a coffee table magazine - ‘International watercolour artists’ published in the US. >>

A POETRY IN WATER SPLASH

Sunil conducts watercolour workshops regularly. His excellent communication skill has drawn students to him across continents for his online watercolour classes. He is a busy online instructor whose YouTube channel features useful tips for watercolourists and art enthusiasts. There are 156 videos based on watercolour medium posted till date and has attracted audience worldwide. >>

A POETRY IN WATER SPLASH

Sunil Kumar popularly known as Sunil Linus De is the kind of artist who tries to bring forth brightness and charm to the observer. His paintings are never intended to draw controversy or to instigate hate. His paintings make the onlooker feel the hot blazing sun inside the coolness of an air-conditioned gallery or the crisp coolness of the water droplets of rain as if he is being transported into a place in the picture that he longed to be. >>

A POETRY IN WATER SPLASH

The lights and shadows produced by the right mix of colours and the right consistency can be achieved only with sheer brilliance. <>

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